Reflect & React

How Artistic Research
Empowers Musicians and
Performing Artists at Higher
Education Institutions

Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln (Cologne, Germany)
12 - 13 May 2023

Introduction

The economic-cultural environment musicians and artists are facing nowadays also challenges the culture of teaching and learning at Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in the Arts. The crucial question is how to offer students a multiplicity of choices that serve their individual interests and strengths, but at the same time prepare them for a professional life that requires more than only meeting high artistic standards. To be successful as creative professionals in the 21st century, HMEI graduates not only need a broader set of skills than in the past, they must also be highly flexible and adaptable. Cooperativeness and critical thinking are just as essential as the ability to reflect on the economic, ecological and social context in which one's own professional activities take place.

Reflect&React brings together two cross-border projects co-financed by the European Union as part of its Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership Programme which have both a main focus on investigating what added value engaging in artistic research has for the development of an outstanding artistic profile. RAPP Lab approaches the issue from a more analytical point of view, while REACT – as the project title suggests – places a stronger focus on developing and testing alternative models of learning and teaching at HMEIs. At the end of the day, however, both projects are facing similar challenges and asking similar questions which will certainly be an interesting starting point for discussion with both representatives of the projects and participants of the event.

RAPP Lab stands for 'Reflection based Artistic Professional Practice' bringing together 6 HMEIs from 6 European countries who, over the past two and a half years, have explored in a series of multi-national encounters (so-called Labs) how reflective methodologies of artistic research empower musicians to creatively respond to the economic-cultural environment they are exposed to. This not only resulted in extensive video material documenting the work of the Labs, but also in a Catalogue raisonné offering a good insight into the diversity and multifaceted nature of the approaches pursued.

REACT is committed to overcoming the fixation of conventional music performing studies on technical skills by developing and testing alternative solutions that have their starting point in reflective musical practice and material thinking and are inspired by a common epistemological framework. The project's main objectives are described as 'linking artistic research, artistic training, personal development, and career management with each other'. The models developed as part of the project are grouped under the acronym AR-BL, standing for 'Artistic Research-Based Learning'.

Reflect&React is not primarily meant to just showcase the results of a successful project work, but to give an opportunity to further discuss the issues that have been raised when working on the projects together with invited guests and participants. The event provides a platform for dialogue and (inter)active involvement. The floor will be given to young, emerging, reflective artists as well as to Music HEI senior management and representatives of other art disciplines.

Key questions to be addressed will be:

- How to sensibilise students for their relationship to their own artistic practice?
- How to create learning and teaching atmospheres in which collaboration and responsibility are in focus?
- How can findings from the projects contribute to re-think and re-design study programmes and curricula?
- What formats and settings are suited to promote and to support learning & teaching that is informed by artistic research for students at master's, doctoral and even bachelor's level?

We would be very happy to welcome you to Cologne in May to reflect and react on these and more issues together with you, with colleagues and international experts in artistic research.

Opening session

The conference began with a warm welcome from **Tilmann Claus** (Rector of the HfMT Cologne). **Stefan Gies** (AEC's Chief Executive) welcomed participants to the conference. He highlighted the challenges faced in securing funding for Artistic Research projects and remarked the importance of the conference as it brought together two projects: REACT and RAPP Lab. **Evelyn Buyken** (Head of Artistic Research at HfMT Cologne, Forum for Artistic Research and RAPP Lab), welcomed attendees to a conference that marked the last phase of the RAPP Lab project. Evelyn considered the conference as a milestone for the development of artistic research in Germany and focused on the potential of Artistic Research as a changemaker.

 Music introduction:

Sonate pour violoncelle et piano – Francis
Poulenc (1899-1963)
II. Cavatine
III. Ballabile

Hedda Lydiana Aaland, Violoncello
Antoine Chrétien, Klavier

Welcome words:

Tilmann Claus (HfMT Cologne)
Stefan Gies (AEC)
Evelyn Buyken (HfMT Cologne, Forum Artistic
Research, RAPP Lab)

Exemplary outcomes RAPP Lab and REACT

Stefan Östersjö
Gilvano Dalagna
Jorge Salgado Correia
(REACt)

Evelyn Buyken
Jonathan Impett
Johannes Kretz
Theodore Parker
Sybille Fraquelli
(RAPP Lab)

Poster presentation

The poster presentation session played a vital role in the conference, providing a space for selected applicants who had responded to the call for contributions launched in February 2023. In the call, intended for artist-researchers pursuing their MA/PhD degrees, applicants were asked thought-provoking questions about how Artistic Research influenced their artistic identity, the impact of their research projects on their professional perspectives, and the development of meta-skills beyond their specific research topics.

The poster presentation offered the chosen applicants an opportunity to exhibit their reflections and ideas, while also engaging in valuable interactions by receiving feedback and questions from fellow participants.

Presenters:

Ettore Cauvin, Beatriz Galán, Francesco Marzano, Naomi Roeers, Elisa Rumici, Adele Thoma, Izabela Trzebiatowska, Vera Plosila

Group work

Group-work with inputs on the following topics:

A: What is the role of **reflection and reflexive methods** in Artistic Research?
B: How can artistic research practices guide the **design of study programmes**, **grades and curricula** in Higher Music Education?

Group 1
Stefan Östersjö (REACt, Piteå) A
Tobias Hartmann and Sam Hopkins (Köln Media School) A
Arabella Pare (Karlsruhe) A
Hakan Ulus (Klagenfurt) B

A relatively brief discussion stimulated by four varied presentations generated something of a compendium of the issues and topics of artistic research in both individual and institutional contexts. **Arabella Pare** (Karlsruhe) asked who can participate in artistic reflection and why might they do so. She gave a very original view of a creative project based on the work of Xenakis, showing how temporal distance becomes a crucial component in reflection. **Hakan Ulus** (Klagenfurt) discussed the process, challenges and opportunities of introducing artistic research as a new institutional practice in a context where it has no established place. An overview of theoretical and experimental views of reflection in artistic research was provided by **Stefan Östersjö** (REACt, Piteå), who demonstrated their relevance and application in the context of his own extensive experience. **Tobias Hartmann and Sam Hopkins** (Köln Media School) presented their individual projects of sound and film that embodied and addressed many of the questions that had emerged, as well as leading to discussion of dissemination, relevance, and the wider social potential of artistic research.

Group 2

Paul Craenen (Den Haag, EPARM) A
Evelyn Buyken (Cologne, RAPP Lab) B
Anna Maria Bordin (Turin, EPARM) A
Peter Dejans (Ghent) A

Paul Craenen (The Hague, EPARM) emphasized that instead of a subjective or objective perspective on the work being performed, he would rather speak of proximity and distance. AR is seen as a productive disruption to the flow of a musical performance. When the interferences lead to musical transformation, this disruption generates new knowledge. **Evelyn Buyken** (Cologne, RAPP Lab) spoke on topic B. Since PhD programmes in AR are still not accessible in Germany due to legal reasons, she suggested to approach the matter at the HfMTh Cologne so to speak from the other end. Bachelor students should be introduced to the topic in a playful way (and on a voluntary basis). She presented her approach on the example of a singer who felt that Clara Schumann's lied "Der Mond" did not meet the student's own idea of the moon. With the help of collage, this student developed an attitude that strengthens her own understanding of the words and the lied, but also her identification with Clara Schuman's composition. As part of a series of courses entitled "Shaping the Future", she used a methodological circle in which various phases from exposure to implementation were developed, exposed and tested by the students. **Anna Maria Bordin** (Turin, EPARM WG) reported on a 7-year project from the practice of her piano teaching, in which she and three students with different professional backgrounds (composition, music analysis, etc.) worked on piano reductions from Stravinsky's Sacre du Printemps resulting in different variants. The question is: How do different approaches contribute to better understanding. The act of working out these piano reductions changes the interpretation. The performances, which we repeatedly held during the course of the project, allowed research to be permanently linked back to artistic practice.

Peter Dejans (Ghent) finally asked: "To what can extend the use of artistic material challenge our reflective attitude?" and "Could the nature of artistic material challenge a reflective attitude?"

Concert

Hybrid concert with **LoLa** – A low latency, high quality audio/video transmission system for network musical performances and interaction developed by **Conservatorio di Musica "Giuseppe Tartini"** from Trieste (Italy) in collaboration with **GARR**, the Italian Research and Academic Network

<u>Programme:</u>

W. A. Mozart, Piano Quartet in g-minor KV 478
Peeter Margus (Violine, EAMT Tallinn)
Aiden James Sullivan (Viola, HfMT Cologne)
Louisa Kaltenbach (Violoncello, HfMT Cologne)
Mantas Šernius (piano, EAMT Tallinn)

Riho Esko Maimets (*1988), "Sinikõrgustele" ("Infinite Blue Heights"; 2019) for two pianos
Maila Laidna (piano 1, EAMT Tallinn)
Tao Hwang (piano 2, HfMT Cologne)

Inputs on topics

A: What is the role of reflection and reflexive methods in Artistic Research?
B: How can artistic research practices guide the design of study programmes, grades and curricula in Higher Music Education?

Barbara Lüneburg (Linz) A
Matthias Herrmann (Stuttgart, EPARM) B
Jan Philipp Sprick (Hamburg) B
Stephen Broad (Glasgow, EPARM) A

Barbara Lüneburg (Linz) spoke about artistic practice as a way to generate knowledge. For her, the constant connection of research to the act of making music is constitutive, even when she cooperates with researchers who themselves pursue a more theory-oriented approach. **Matthias Herrmann** (Stuttgart, EPARM WG) is also busy with introducing AR-related approaches in bachelor programmes, not least against the background of the difficult situation in Germany in terms of getting recognised post-graduate studies in AR. Instead of a thesis of 30 to 40 pages and an equivalent of 6 ECTS, a composition with comment, an aural exam in musicology or a lecture recital can also serve as an examination achievement. He closed with the motto "Performing can be more than playing and singing". **Jan Philipp Sprick** (Hamburg) - made this motto his own. He reported on the model of cooperation between musicology and AR in joint examination committees and advocated for a case-by-case approach that focuses on the students' (and teachers') interest in the subject. At the end, **Stephen Broad** (Glasgow, EPARM chair) brought together philosophical and pragmatic approaches and encouraged the students to find individual ways.

World cafe-style feedback

Identifying burning issues of Artistic Research

1. How can artistic research fuel student's artistic development?

At first a rhetorical question: Can there be artistic development without AR in some sense? AR encourages students to regard themselves as active agents in the performance, interpretative and narrative process. AR opens mental doors, gives a broader portfolio of skills and materials to build career. AR can give choices to become independent as musician, can give new ideas. Cooperation of different teachers is needed.

2. "Only a reflective teacher is a good teacher!" Do you agree?

First, the question arises, if a verbally reflective teacher is a good teacher. Or is it simply necessary for the mental survival of the teacher...? Or, a teacher who can help the student identify his/her needs. This depends of the aim, of the age, of the subject, of the student. A good teacher has the ability to reflect in different way about a number of things. The opinion was expressed, that a good teacher has to be reflective, but not always in a verbally and intellectually articulated way.

3. What is needed to make performative artistic knowledge communicable?

First -> attain distance to one's intuition. Then -> transform intuition into a communicable form which is not (only?) art itself. -> "I do… because…!"

.   (Artistic) research may enable students to communicate about implicit knowledge 1.-->3. To find a target early in the project and adaptability of the transferable knowledge in certain target community.

Panel discussion

Artistic Research at the interface between artistic practice, research and reaching

The conferences' final part was a panel discussion chaired by **Stefan Gies** (AEC) discussing with **Ivar Grydeland** (NMH Oslo, associated professor for improvised music), **Evelyn Buyken** (HfMT Cologne, Substitute Professor for artistic research and director of RAPP Lab), **Stefan Östersjö** (Chaired Professor of Musical Performance at Piteå School of Music, Luleå and director of REACT), **Vera Plosila** (PhD candidate in the DocArtes programme at Orpheus Institute Gent), **Stephen Broad** (Director of research at Royal Conservatoire Scotland and EPARM Chair) and **Christian Fischer** (Rector at the Hochschule für Musik Trossingen and designated chair of the Rektorenkonferenz of the German Musikhochschulen).

Two main subjects have been touched: Firstly, how to teach artistic research in future and how did this conference contribute to this topic? And secondly how far does the development of artistic research at German Higher Music Education Institutions interlink with the international developments?
Both projects RAPP Lab and REACT put **student-centred and experimental learning settings** in the center of their outcomes. To implement those in HME institutions a development of teaching strategies should be offered for teaching stuff. This lead to the shared conviction of the panel sitting on the podium to put research on this new teaching culture in the focus of future projects, maybe as a follow up of the partners in the RAPP Lab and REACT consortium. Since this conference was the first one of artistic research under the organisation of the AEC and EPARM hold at a German HME, **the development of Artistic Research in Germany** in relation with the international partners was also a core discussion point. As contributions from German representatives of HME institutions, in which artistic research has been implemented already, pointed out: Since the third cycle, a doctorate in artistic research, still needs political decisions, the focus is more on Bachelor and Master Level at the moment. The final statement lead to the shared opinion that in order to make the outcomes of RAPP Lab and REACT with regard to teaching strategies more flourishing, we all should **listen more to the teachers and students** and take their questions instead of telling them what to do.

(Open) end – What's next?

Closing words:

Evelyn Buyken (HfMT Cologne, Forum Artistic Research, RAPP Lab)

Musically farewell:

Kölner Saxophonquartett - **Yen-Wei Chang** (soprano), **Christine Petersen** (alto), **Dominik Bökenkamp** (tenor), **Clara Munté Muñiz** (baritone):

Gabriel Pierné (1863-1937): Introduction et variations sur une ronde populaire (1936)

About RAPP Lab

RAPP Lab aims and objectives

RAPP Lab is a three-year EU-funded research project supported by the ERASMUS+ programme "Strategic Partnerships". RAPP stands for "Reflection-based Artistic Professional Practice". The project will be taken forward through a series of multi-national encounters described as Labs. The project brings together the artistic research expertise of seven partner institutions – conservatoires in Oslo, Tallinn, Rome and Vienna as well as the Orpheus Instituut Ghent and the AEC – under the direction and initiative of the Hochschule for Music and Dance Cologne.

RAPP Lab explores how the reflective methodologies of artistic research empower musicians to creatively respond to the economic-cultural environment with they are facing. During the course of experimental, thematically and methodologically differentiated artistic research labs, advanced music students will have the opportunity to try out new teaching & learning formats. Informed by artistic research, such approaches build on and extend specialised artistic study programmes to explore new modes of knowledge production. Findings from the Labs will be used to generate and refine a structured concept for the implementation of artistic research paradigms within the learning and teaching programmes at music academies. Gaining new knowledge through reflectiveness and critical thinking empowers students, graduates and teachers in their art-making but also helps them to develop new economic and cultural roles and, as a consequence, to widen and increase students' future cultural participation.

RAPP Lab partners

- Hochschule für Musik und Tanz Köln, Germany
- Eesti Muusika- ja Teatriakadeemia, Estonia
- Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst Wien, Austria
- Association Européenne des Conservatoires, Academies de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC), Belgium
- Norges musikkhøgskole, Norway
- Orpheus Instituut vzw, Belgium
- Conservatorio di Musica Santa Cecilia, Italy

🌐 **RAPP Lab website**